



# K A N S A S

RODERICK L. BREMBY, SECRETARY

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

## Caring for Small Children in a Disaster

Infants, toddlers and other small children require special attention – especially after a disaster. For example, you should store enough baby formula, baby food, diapers, bottles, toys and games in your emergency kit to keep your children safe and comfortable following a disaster. Here are some other tips:

- ❑ If children are at preschool, daycare or school, it is important that parents and guardians know the emergency procedures of these places. You should review and update information, including the weight of children under 90 pounds, on your child's emergency card. The weight of smaller children is important to health workers who might have to give them medicines.
- ❑ Make sure you authorize someone nearby to pick up your children from school in case you are unable to travel to the school after a disaster.
- ❑ Parents should inform neighbors when their children are home alone so neighbors could take care of them if a disaster occurs.

### **Reassure your child:**

School-age children should be warned about possible dangers. But they don't need too much information about what can go wrong. Talking too often or in too much detail can increase your child's fear. Instead, you should:

- ❑ Encourage children to talk about their fears. Let them ask questions and describe how they're feeling. Listen to what they say, as a family group when possible. Emphasize that your family has plans to handle emergencies.
- ❑ Talk together about the adults who are there to help, such as relatives, teachers, law enforcement officials and firefighters.
- ❑ Remember that your child notices when you are anxious or afraid. Try not to react with alarm to an emergency.
- ❑ Reassure them with love. Tell them they are safe, that everything will be all right and life will return to normal again. Hold and hug them frequently.

- ❑ Keep them informed, in simple language, about what is happening. Emphasize that they are not responsible for what happened.
- ❑ Monitor TV and other media. Make sure your child does not see or hear too many disaster stories. Regularly point out good news about how people throughout the world treat others
- ❑ Encourage them to return to school and discuss problems with teachers and to resume play and other activities.

**Teach your child how to react in an emergency.**

It's one of the best ways to help him or her feel safe. Teach your child when and how to:

- ❑ Call for help
- ❑ Call the family contact person
- ❑ Evacuate your home
- ❑ Take shelter in your home

**For more information**

Visit the Department of Health and Human Services "Coping With Traumatic Events" Web site at <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/TraumaticEvents/tips.asp> for more information on the needs of children following a terrorist attack.